

THROW DOWN THE GAUNTLET AND RAUCOUS IT UP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!11

THE BEANCOUNTERS

The Beancounter's Workshop. An overhead mirror is inclined to show the beans, white navy variety, which are counted by pushing them about by credit cards. Lighting is brilliant, and hands and nails immaculate. In the most elaborate setting, beans are chuted down and each beancounter's work surface is separated by a partition; in the least, beans can be poured by bucket into a shared bin. Much of the above, too, simply can be suggested.

1 female; 3 or 4 males

Girl--boufant hairdo and capacious housedress
Young man--faded Yuppie clothes
Oldtimer--wears baseball cap
Malcontent--blue collar casual
Slick-- some sort of shiny shirt and shiny pants
(Oldtimer can double.)

A HORN (compressed air variety is best) is frequently sounded to indicate Authority's disapproval.

1

MALCONTENT

They always come back!

YOUNG MAN

It's...true that their beans were larger and better formed for the most part, and the hours shorter but--

OLDTIMER

Not a happy shop.

MALCONTENT

This is?

OLDTIMER

Someone it's only when you go places that you find out...relative...uh--

YOUNG MAN

Not a perfect world and who said it was? Anyhow they were all Dinkers!

GIRL

No!

YOUNG MAN

Would youábelieve? It was Dinker Dinker Dinker day and night!

MALCONTENT

Huh! All these styles of counting,philosophies! This and that expert quoted like so many flushing toilets, and now even this new wave shit...and always always always, no matter what, that old universal: the cold death grip of the academy. Bean-Constructionists, aint that it now? The very latest sanitized shit? And tomorrow it'll be Bean Anti-Constructionists or Anti Bean Constructioinists or, I don't know, Pinto Bean Modernist Folklorists...something equally ridiculous. Oh my but doesn't the newer gets older every empty day? Every minute!

YOUNG MAN

Berkdolph! I recognize him. He said that! Pretty old stuff now! But I lied. (HORN!) There was even one Sinkowitzian there. That University of Chicago School!--they just want their club.

MALCONTENT

And if you can get some millionaire asshole to put up the bucks, why not?

YOUNG MAN

They think repeating is wisdom--the past facts being--

MALCONTENT

Lies!

YOUNG MAN

--best weapon against present. Tradition, that's the word they use.

MALCONTENT

Fantasy! A mighty fortress is our gelt.

YOUNG MAN

But they're still not as bad as the Neo Beanos--poetic and disassociated.

MALCONTENT

Pathetic you mean.

GIRL

Where are I? O to be insensitive and thereby know!

MALCONTENT

Spend whole life studying one bean! Aint that a kick in the ass?

GIRL

Bean zen zen bean. Bean zen zen bean. Bean zen zen bean.
OHHHHMMMMMMMM! (mantra)

OLDTIMER

Well...I don't know much, and I never said I did, but I know what I know.

GIRL (mocks)

To know the world of beans you must know nothing of beans. Start as would a child. Then you will study the world that is without beans, and what you do not touch will be beans. You will therefore know beans for the first time.

MALCONTENT

And then you won't know beans and will therefore not know shit.

YOUNG MAN

I go back to Bergdolph all the time, because he calls a spade a spade. It's Bean Counting! He's proud to say and I am too. I am a bean counter. It's not Legume Enumeration. I'm not a Legume Enumerator. And Raiyuz-Conn for all her brilliance and innovation is just a stuffed shirt...or blouse.

GIRL

Don't she wish?

YOUNG MAN

And Dinker is on the sidelines forever. The accesories! Who

cares what you wear and how well you have to drive a BMW or Saab or whatever the newest toy.

OLDTIMER

I'm sorry that you had an unfortunate experience there at that there other beancouting shop but...well You just don't understand all the years it took to figure out all those things.

MALCONTENT

All these hot ideologies just appeal to you cause you're young.

YOUNG MAN

You're wrong most of my ideas come from the oldest critic of all, Sinkowitz. (HORN!)

MALCONTENT

Sinkowitz! Hell, he just wants to destroy the whole profession, and put what in its place? Slash the shit out of everything and leave you with nothing! And those who'll be the victims cheer the loudest--it's like a presidential election!

YOUNG MAN

At least Dinker, for all it's fashionable to laugh and sniff at him, wants to preserve the main--(HORN!)

MALCONTENT

Yeah, that's fine. Be a little quiet.

GIRL

They don't like nobody.

OLDTIMER

There was Jesus Meek and Mild, I think was the name. They didn't object to him. Well they did at the time, but later they--

MALCONTENT

said eat our shit and he'll comfort you.

YOUNG MAN (shouts)

What is freedom? (HORN!)

MALCONTENT

Shhh! Freedom is what's allowed--that never changes anywhere.

OLDTIMER (shaky)
Now let's not get sucked into all this talking now.

YOUNG MAN (to source of HORN!)
I'm on your side really! (HORN!)
If you knew it.

OLDTIMER
We're just having a little fun! It don't mean nothing.

MALCONTENT (to YOUNG MAN)
You and your ideas! (menace) If we start getting lots of broken beans--

GIRL (walking back to bin)
Mysticsssss: blackness of peace within the bean...verily oh
verily I say unto you that you can never take thine habitation
within the bean for if you do-ith you must verily verily be of
the bean perforce, and of the bean only. Bride of the Bean.

YOUNG MAN (whispers)
Sinkowitz, now HE knows the human differences.

MALCONTENT
Oh yeah, well, I'll tell you, Buddy, in the next world I'm just
gonna fuck everything that moves. Just count em here and screw
my life away outside the shop. What burns me, what truly burns
my ass is that I paid attention once. I believed them when they
said it all means something. I even fuckin voted! Now I know
that I've counted the same beans over and over for thirty years!

OLDTIMER
That never happened. That can never happen.

MALCONTENT
Hey! I even have some pets, one black one that's been rounded
and rounded and polished oh boy! Every day or so here it comes!
So tiny now from all the years, all the rubbing rubbing years,
that it's in danger of dissapearing forever. But then again
aren't we all when the powers to be decide that's it? Put in
the machines, put in the computers, bring in the toothless
Filipinos, invest the money in Mafia entertainment stock.
Whatever. Anyway, fuck all the old employees who just gave
their health up, that's all.

YOUNG MAN

That's statistically impossible! It can't be the same bean.
That is utterly utterly impossible.

MALCONTENT

Of course not. Sinkowitz says it can't, right? Therefore it
can't! Life is simple if you just study and learn what they
want you to and open your mouth like an ass.

YOUNG MAN

As an ass, grammatically

MALCONTENT

Elliptically too.

OLDTIMER

Shhhhhh. They don't abide fancy talk.

MALCONTENT (muses)

Same bean...thirty...years.

GIRL

Can't be the same beans all the time 'cause nothing could be
that horrible.

MALCONTENT

Ask Hitler. Step this way, I got some lovely showers.

GIRL

That was eons ago.

YOUNG MAN

More than a google of beans past!

OLDTIMER

Lots of beans counted since then I'll betcha. Under the bridge,
over the dam, atop the...the...? (stops, puzzled)

YOUNG MAN

You must find meaning in work!

MALCONTENT

Once I did. Now I don't.

YOUNG MAN

And another thing, why...why don't YOU get the horn? You've been saying--

MALCONTENT

Real things. They don't see any danger in that. I mean, reality has its own limits built in. Not like philosophy or dreams or songs with fuzzy lyrics, or majors in a college.

GIRL (chanting)

The still point of the turning world is the bean! The still point of the turning world is the bean! Oh fear oh fear the pre-Bean Chaos!

MALCONTENT

Sing it again! I only had half of my stomach taken out.

2 HORN! in blasts of three indicating speedup. All go to bin(s), joining GIRL and work furiously. After a while OLDTIMER is allowed to stop in order to read to them.

OLDTIMER

"Make money selling this lovely, creamy stationary to friends. Actually, it sells itself! Send for the sample kit described above." Hmmm...it's not described anywheres. Oh well.

"A mere one hundred and twenty six dollars gets you underway. (more triple blasts of HORN--they work even faster) J. G. of Staten Island, New York, made eighteen thousand dollars from Tuesday to Friday. B. O.. a retired Sea Cook of Hinton, West Virginia...

MALCONTENT

Mountain oysters he can cook now. (Long blast of HORN!) I'm allowed to talk. I aint missing no strokes!

OLDTIMER

"And saving the best for last--":

GIRL

That's encouraging. (long blast of HORN!) Jeez!

OLDTIMER

"H. D. OF Clean Lake, Idaho made more this past year than Ecuador!"

MALCONTENT

What can lie like Capitalism? I ask you! Nothing can! Makes you proud! Listen! No horn! The horn's proud too.

Lights go down half, indicating a break for all. MALCONTENT AND OLDTIMER exit.

3

YOUNG MAN

You've avoided me since--

GIRL

No I--

YOUNG MAN

I'm not going to count beans all my life, believe me! I'll love it while I'm here but...well hitch your wagon to this star! Hitch your wagon to this star!

GIRL

I always knew you were ambitious. That's why you left here. But coming back this way, well--

YOUNG MAN

Please believe me! It's part of a great great plan!

GIRL

I do believe you, but there's something--?

YOUNG MAN

Ask me anything!

GIRL

Something else.

YOUNG MAN

Oh?

GIRL

I heard it by accident. It's possessing me...I can't sleep thinking about it. There...there used to be something called a woman's movement? For women? It sounds so strange to say it, like you're, I don't, know, repeating somebody else's delusion or something. The person I overheard could be a little crazy.

YOUNG MAN

No delusion exactly, but it was just barely allowed then, and when it started getting anywhere they just found ways of slowing it and slowing it until it stopped. I guess they killed some of the women too--that's what they did to the men back then, the ones that went too far.

GIRL

But if it's all completely gone away then what can I do?

YOUNG MAN (rush)

You must...start with love of beans and then you will love our benefactors who make all of this this this possible with their own charity and sacrifice, and then you love yourself for being this this this type of person who...loves in such a, well, uh, patriotic way.

GIRL

Like a whatchcalliit, boyscout?

YOUNG MAN

Then and only then are you worthy to love someone who has made the same commitments.

GIRL

You make it sound so easy and yet sometimes I don't even want to come to work in the morning. Maybe if they let women...start up again--? (HORN!--very long blast)

MALCONTENT AND OLDTIMER hurriedly enter and start working.

YOUNG MAN

She means she is fearful that she may not be worthy enough that particular day! Coming to work on that--

SHE

No. Don't...tell it. They always know what you mean. You're lucky when they don't make it worse--or make it up.

They join MALCONTENT AND OLDTIMER, walking as if thir legs were lead.

4 Speedup HORN! sounds! endlessly. They work so fast they bump each other's hands etc.

MALCONTENT

I'm not gon--

OLDTIMER

Whoa there!

MALCONTENT

--have to take this! And you're not the champ you used to be. We don't have to put up...I--

OLDTIMER

You look at pictures [when you] come in here! Blue Ribbon, Fall River!

YOUNG MAN (speeding so much, voice hops an octave) I read 'bout you...kid!

MALCONTENT

That was then.

OLDTIMER

[I can] hold my own! Oh! (card breaks)

GIRL

I don't mind. People slow up. There should be allowances made! (very long blast of HORN!)

OLDTIMER

(pushing beans with nose--they stop to watch)

MALCONTENT

I'm sorry. Oh I'm so very sorry.

YOUNG MAN

Oh God! No!

GIRL

Whaaaaa?

YOUNG MAN

He broke his card! He broke his card!

GIRL

A-a-a-a-anybody could! Don't...please? He he he he is one of the greats!

YOUNG MAN

Tragic but...Eskimos'd take Grandpa out on the ice, leave him there. No teeth to chew the rawhide. Or throw him in the water. One time parka filled with air and he kept bobbing up and they all laughed, falling down and laughing on that blue ice. Awful blue ice. (OLDTIMER, who has stopped nose-counting, shakes uncontrollably.) He managed...get air out and down he went!

GIRL

Down he went! Down he went all right! Down he (starts laughing hysterically)

YOUNG MAN (joining laughter)

I knew you'd do that! That's what I missed out there in the big time, your laugh! But...stop! You'll give me a fit!

MALCONTENT (laughing despite himself)

You...giggle maniacs! Come on now. Let's stifle the gaiety. Our duty...the law...'s clear. Broken CARD! Some dignity now.

OLDTIMER (whining)

I was third, International Olypics. Lahore!

GIRL (out of control again)

Those the French Olypics?

MALCONTENT

Must be, 'cause look! (holds it up) a condom in that awful mix of crap and beans and rocks and broken shit they fed him to break his card. Hey (waving it) It aint ever supposed to be on a moral basis! (weak HORN) See? It knows.

YOUNG MAN (in maniacal, fitful dance of glee.) Oooo ooooo oooo oooo oooo!

MALCONTENT

Now now. Let's get to it. (MALCONTENT leading, they fall upon OLDTIMER and beat him to death. YOUNG MAN drags him off as MALCONTENT and GIRL come down and sit on apron, try to catch breath)

MALCONTENT (to reassure)

There's beauty in everything, they say.

GIRL

I...don't know.

5 SLICK enters, horn under his arm.

MALCONTENT

Oh Jesus! They sent FBI-KGB-GESTAPO-GE. (SLICK blasts him in face with HORN! MALCONTENT strikes out in reflex)

Accident my good sir! Accident my dear good sir! (SLICK abruptly gestures that they should get back to work. After a few moments he throws each an additional card and they work with two cards each as he sits and blast HORN! in triple, speedup mode.)

Slow fade to near black; SLICK enter audience where he blasts away in speedup mode. Lights suddenly up full.

GIRL

Oh no!

YOUNG MAN

S-S-S-Sinkowitz warned against this! Called it a Kill-Series.

GIRL

We've been good! We've been...what more--?

SLICK gestures with horn that GIRL should go one way and YOUNG MAN the other, leaving MALCONTENT alone at the beans.

MALCONTENT (slow paced)

A...shoe...bolts...nuts...dog collar, parts of..is it a fish?

And how am I to count it? One fish? one two...seven bones?

(one blast of HORN!) I know. My turn. (calmly rises and walks

to apron)

YOUNG MAN

I can't even laugh.

MALCONTENT

Yeah and fuck you too! Sitting out there thinking you're so smart and superior. (Horn malfunctions and SLICK shakes it.) Where do all of you count your beans, huh? General Motors, Dupont, Sun Oil, Hercules, General fuckin and Nip-Miscellaneous MOTORS? (add any large local firm to list) some suckass communications EMPIRE? EMPIRE! Some dot-com chaos!(makes sucking noises) That's you! That's you! Or Or Or Or some BANK! where you lick the floor for lunch and then put your arm up the ass of poor people all the afternoon? Some government agency where you suck the dried-out public tit? Is that it? Hey? Hey? Hey? Hey? (obscene gestures and some mooning as SLICK hits horn on seat) Right here, kiss it right here, keeps you in practice for your job. Oh excuse me, your poSIS!tion! And don't think everybody doesn't know! There are no secrets. (SLICK rushes stage and smacks MALCONTENT with horn) They exit and we hear beating noises off. When they reach crescendo, battered MALCONTENT reenters.

GIRL

He's alive! Maybe it just a brutal beating and that's all!

YOUNG MAN

It is in the contract that a...displaced beancounter can have his/her final say.

GIRL

What about the oldtimer?

YOUNG MAN

He forgot to insist.

MALCONTENT

It is curtains then, a life. Why is it that the cynic's view becomes the one confirmed at this, the very end? Is it because you've always known such an outcome would arrive, and all the rest has only been the sleepwalking towards it?

Why not an unremitting flow of love to those who serve?

Why oh why can't I mean as much as this, (holding up bean) the very smallest element of our lives, this something we so often ridicule? I say to all who hear me now and those on down throughout the inconsequential centuries to come that I forgive--myself for what I've done to me because of you.

BLACKOUT

7 GIRL and YOUNG MAN working. SLICK in MALCONTENT 's vacated chair and working on horn with screwdriver. He ignores YOUNG MAN in following)

YOUNG MAN

What is this crap?

GIRL

Oh no! Mistake! You're too young.

YOUNG MAN

Stop it! Stop it! You there with that stupid horn can't you--?

GIRL (amazed)

All shoehorns! Shoehorns! Thousands!

YOUNG MAN

I insist on beans! I insist on beans! I insist on beans! I insist on beans! I am a beancounter, not a legume enumerator, and certainly not a shoe--

GIRL

Of course he does! We do! I I I I insist on beans FOR him!

YOUNG MAN

I believe there's some mistake. There has definitely been some mistake.

GIRL

What could be clearer? (SLICK shakes his head and horn together)

YOUNG MAN

All right then, I will recant. I am perfectly willing to recant. Was it Dinker or Sinkowitz you objected to? Were they found to be--? Just tell me what to do. To whom do you have objection? I will recant point by point or overall! (HORN! which is now working.)

GIRL

Tell him what to say!

YOUNG MAN

Please!

GIRL

He didn't mean anything about anything. He's a very good counter! (Very very long blast of HORN!)

YOUNG MAN (to her)

No. I've begged enough, and put forth brilliant arguments enough. Too many pearls have I proffered to swine. (rises, strides upstage where he's hit by spotlight.) Then this is an end to it. Very well. It's easier in a way. I can, I don't know, breathe.

(He delivers exact final speech MALCONTENT did, slower pacing and more syrupy tone.)

YOUNG MAN

It is curtains then etc.

GIRL Pearls?

SLICK leads him away and we can hear him being beaten by the horn off. GIRL alterately cries and imitates the HORN!

Blackout.

9 return to normal but with everything cleaner and brighter, maybe some touches of color with flowers etc. with

GIRL getting nice white beans and humming merrily along.

SLICK enters with bucket of beans which he proceeds to pour down inside the front of his pants, squirming and making sexual sounds.

GIRL (horrified, but quickly rises with smile and goes to him with a container of beans which she pours in the same place) This is easy if it's all you want. There now.

SLICK (inarticulate whine)

GIRL

I do love you. I don't care what it takes we'll make it... (work)...sex and work will make it work, will make sex work, bean sex. Come to me, come in me, come unto me, pour yourself into me, pour beans on me and over me and into me. (SLICK scoops up beans and pours them on her.) Let us make us one, and one with beans from now until the hour of our death. Please!

(SLICK with many gyrations and moans dances away.)

GIRL (breathy)

Come back, Lover-Bean. Auto eroticism won't save the race, however well-intended. (He returns and they hold hands and stare into each other's eyes.) Let us make us one, and one with beans from now until the hour of our death. Let us make us one and one with beans from now until the hour of our death. Amen.

They embrace and SLICK manouvrers her around till he can reach the horn, on table or floor or whatever. He gets it but she hugs him so hard he cannot operate it.

SLICK (frustrated little whines)

GIRL

I'll never let you go until you be my yielding ever after Lover-Bean!